

I find this draft to be very disturbing. As noted on P. 36 of the EA, the access to the trail system and outdoor activities indeed attracts LANL staff to Los Alamos. People don't come here because of the desire for "big city" life and I speculate that many leave because of the lack of activities on the hill besides outdoor recreational opportunities. I worked at LLNL for 11 years and was concerned of quality of life issues in the increasingly congested Livermore Valley and the difficult access to the Sierras (and congestion once accessed). Los Alamos presented an opportunity to live in a uncongested, beautiful environment in the mountains and still be able to perform exciting and relevant scientific research. The possibility of trail running on nearby LANL trails during lunch hour is fantastic. Although the enjoyment has decreased some due to the fire and bark beetle kill, it is still fun to watch the forest rejuvenate. However, I recently have been presented with a very desirable scientific position with another agency in a different location. I have difficulty thinking about leaving Los Alamos and LANL, but I do think laboratory trail closures will probably be the final straw in my decision (this on top of all the problems with LANL UC problems, bureaucrazy (intentional misspelling) run amok (as evidenced by this 71 page EA document), and the continual attacks on LANL and lack of strong leadership to push back on the unfunded, bureaucratic mandates imposed on the laboratory.

I should also say that I recognize that one of the pictures (canyon closed) sign at the lower portion of Los Alamos Canyon. This sign came up not long after the fire when the closure was for safety reasons. I remember sending a letter to John Browne when the sign failed to come down during the winter (noting that the County ice rink was open up stream). He said "done" and took the sign down. But, alas, it has reappeared. We need to LET REASON AND COMMON SENSE

PREVAIL and let folks take responsibility for their action and safety in these situations.

If you would like a response please provide your name and a mailing address:  
Steven R. Taylor

Recreational use of trails on LANL land by LANL employees is important to the well-being of the Laboratory workforce. My personal use has included several thousand hours of jogging on trails in upper and lower Mortendad Canyon, on the "Inside Passage" trail between TA-3 and TA-16, in upper Pajarito Canyon, etc. Jogging on trails has significant safety and health advantages compared to jogging on sidewalks on roads including reduced danger from and to vehicular traffic and reduced stress to the joints of the legs (particularly important to our aging Lab workforce). Availability of a natural setting near to the workplace has tremendous psychological benefits for a workforce in highly stressful jobs.

David Scudder

Hello All,

I am a long time resident of White Rock. I am also a home owner in Pajarito Acres. Over the course of my lifetime I have enjoyed playing in the canyons and mesas South of White Rock. As a boy, I learned to ride a dirt bike in water canyon. I also enjoyed using the old dirt pit for a target practice area. These days, I can only enjoy waking my dog on the trails and roads that I used to have unlimited access to. Now I hear that this area may get closed completely. With everything that is happening around this community, I am finding it harder and harder to work and live in Los Alamos. The hardworking people of our community need open places to recreate and spend time with their families. The DOE should consider the impact on the quality of life of their work force that such a closure would have.

I have already started my search for a new job outside of New Mexico. I won't be hard to find a better place work and live.

Jeff Johnson

Ms. Withers,

Please find attached my comments regarding the Predecisional Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Los Alamos National Laboratory Trails Management Program.

I feel it is important that management of LANL trails be carefully implemented, with due regard given to the varied uses of these trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Regards,

D. Dogruel

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David Dogruel

As an occasional user of LANL trails for recreation, I feel that continued access to these trails provides positive LANL and employee benefits that are not adequately acknowledged in the draft Environmental Assessment. The trails around LANL have been used for many years by employees for hiking, running, mountain biking, or simply getting away from the office for some peace or exercise. These activities are all have low environmental impact, and through management of existing trails, any future impact can be minimized.

LANL has tech areas spread out over the entire Pajarito Plateau, with only one central exercise facility. It is logistically impossible for all employees to access and use this facility, and therefore, the trails, which are also spread out over much of LANL, are valuable recreational outlets to many employees. The employees who utilize these trails also provide a benefit to the safety and security of outlying LANL areas, as they provide the eyes and ears in these areas that are not routinely patrolled or monitored by LANL security forces. Continued employee access to the LANL trail system benefits the employees, LANL, and the environment, and I urge the consideration of these benefits in the analysis of the trails in and around LANL.

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

**John Denko Jr.**  
Cabinet Secretary

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE**



**Carlos R. Maldonado**  
Deputy Secretary / Chief  
Operations

**Marie "Sisi" Saenz**  
Deputy Secretary  
Administration

August 4, 2003


Elizabeth Withers, NEPA Compliance Officer  
Los Alamos Site Office  
528 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Comment on the Predecisional Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Trails Management Program (DOE/EA-1431)

I am the New Mexico State Police Search and Rescue Resource Officer and am writing about the team Mountain Canine Corps (MCC). MCC is actively involved in search and rescue emergency activities in the state of New Mexico. They respond to all search missions they are called out for and have contributed a great deal to the health and safety of the citizens of New Mexico (as well as those people in distress who are visiting New Mexico from elsewhere). Through many years, MCC has been an effective resource in the search and rescue community. Because of the nature of canine search and rescue, they train often and their preparedness for missions are an asset to the state of New Mexico.

I also am aware, having myself attended a mock search on the Laboratory land in the White Rock area in October of 2002, that MCC extensively uses the trails and areas that would be affected by the alternatives posed in the Environmental Assessment.

Sincerely,

  
**James Newberry**  
Search and Rescue  
Resource Officer  
NM State Police

Office of the Secretary 827-3370	Deputy Secretary/Chief New Mexico State Police 827-9002	Special Investigations Albuquerque 841-8053	Motor Transportation 827-0321	Office of Emergency Services and Security 476-9600
Training and Recruiting 827-9251	Technical & Emergency Support 476-9600	Information Technology 827-9121	Support Services 827-9016	

P. O. Box 1628 • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-1628

Dear E. W.

Closing the walking trails is very bad idea. Motorized vehicles should not be in the woods, but us walkers cannot make sparks with our tennis! I walk every lunch hour for my health, I am diabetic, not walking is not an option. If I have to walk on the highway, that is very dangerous. Example: last week there was a new bright blue pickup turning to TA-16 (I work here) and it was hit by a van. Driver of the van said "He did not see the pickup." I do not want to put my life in danger on the highway, all them huge SUVs, pickups etc with people on cellphones, eating, not paying attention, if they cannot see a vehicle, how are they going to see me, I am only 5'3" tall? Please use some common sense if there is anything left here in LA

Helena

Helena Korhonen

Hi,

I would like to volunteer for the trails management committee. I am a trained and certified trails development technician and have designed and worked on several trails in the area. I have done GPS mapping (I have a full set of computerized topos and can upload from my GPS unit) of old, new, and suggested rerouting of trails. I have lived in Los Alamos for 18 years and, I think, know every trail in the area. I am a staff member (quantum physicist) in P-21 and I care deeply about the trails in our area. Thank you.

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Jane E. Nordholt

As a member of Los Alamos Search/Rescue, I would hate to see these lands closed as they would directly affect our training and effectiveness as a public service organization.

Laurie Rossi

Please consider the time factor involved if all employees who NEED to exercise are obliged to travel to a gym or the Wellness Center. This often requires longer than the 1 hour lunch break, or a very long day (>9hours). If we can let people relieve stress through exercise and still be at their jobs and productive the required hours, it sounds like a win/win situation. Stepping out your office door for a walk is one of the perks of working at Los Alamos Lab.

Judy Buckingham

Access to the lands around LANL is one of the primary benefits of working here at the lab. Many people choose to come to Los Alamos because of the outdoor setting and recreational opportunities (lets face it they certainly do not come here for the fine dining or nightlife). Thus, I believe that the lab has to seriously consider what the impact would be of closing off access to their land on a workforce which in many ways already has a low morale. With the UC contract in question and funding shortages many more people are looking elsewhere for job opportunities and our ability to recruit new employees is significantly hampered. The fine hiking trails around here (generally open

to the public yet located on LANL land) are in my mind one of the key selling points as to why someone might wish to work and live in Los Alamos.

Los Alamos County is the smallest in the state. We are lucky however to be surrounded by National Forest lands, BLM, National Monument, Indian, and LANL lands. Unfortunately many of those lands which were once open to the public are now closed for assorted reasons. More and more land is being returned to the Indians who now seem to have an on going policy to restrict access to their lands. (As a child here in NM I remember hiking the Old Chile Linetrail along the banks of the Rio or driving the back dirt road to LA past the rifle range all are now inaccessible to the general public). In addition, a compliment of the Cerro Grande fire, much of the fine hiking in the immediate vicinity has been burned. Though the area is recovering many people choose to not hike in the area for several reasons. First is that it is not safe as dead trees fall daily and unexpectedly, and secondly many people can not or will not enter the area for emotional reasons as the memories of the fire are still too fresh in their minds. To even consider taking away the LANL lands at this time from public access is poor judgment and poor forethought.

I hope LANL will do all it can do to keep the spirit of Los Alamos alive, to help improve morale here at the lab rather than reduce it, and to continue to be a good neighbor to LA county by promoting health, activity, and happiness to any and all who chose to visit or live here in Los Alamos. Please, keep the LANL lands open!

Katie Forman

hi elizabeth,

i have not read the assessment in gory detail but i wanted to jot off a few comments before you terminate the unofficial comment period.

i realize how difficult it is to set something up as multi-use and meet everybody's needs.

i also understand that issues have been raised regarding erosion and unauthorized trail work. i agree in concept with some of these complaints in that i have been dismayed that some of the trail improvements and stabilization efforts have degraded the trails from my perspective (they have been made smoother and less technical, less fun). even though i may not agree with all the work that has been done, i do think it has been done responsibly with the intent and result of stabilizing the trail and surrounding areas from erosion. i question whether the small negatives associated with unauthorized trail building, maintenance, and use justify this huge assessment with its potential of greatly limiting or eliminating this fine public trail network.

i'd like to request that the wording of the 5 selection criteria be reconsidered. it seems the very first criterion, which negates any LANL/DOE mandate for recreation undermines the entire concept of a recreational system and biases the results at the outset toward a much more limited trail network. there are many other criteria that have been totally excluded including potential impacts on the mental and physical health of LANL's work force and LANL's ability to attract and retain needed employees, should the trails be limited or closed off from our use.

assuming the proposed alternative is chosen, i urge you to ensure that the composition of the panel that will be making evaluations and decisions be representative of current trail users. i have been riding these trails for years and by far the greatest number of users are cyclists, hikers, and runners. i have never seen an equestrian in all the years i have frequented these trails. i also bring to your attention the negative impact that motorcyclists and four wheelers have on all trails and hope that they are banned on all trails in the area. all users have some impact but the impact of motorized vehicles is so much greater than other users that trails are effectively ruined for any other use after very few days of moderate motor vehicle usage.

thanks for extending the comment period a little bit and for your consideration of my comments. for many of us, use of this trail network is an integral and fundamental aspect of our employment and/or residence here. at a time when LANL/DOE are in crisis trying to attract and retain qualified employees, reduction or other limitation of our trail usage sounds like a very bad idea especially since there are such limited (and questionable) potential positive impacts.

dave kraig

I have several comments pertaining to the Environmental Assessment and its impact on LANL workers and Los Alamos residents. I believe there would be a significant impact on the well-being of this community should recreational trails be closed to the public, both in terms of morale and community interests.

As a LANL employee, I consider the recreational trails one of the major assets of working at this laboratory and at the site where I work. Until recently, the use of these trails was encouraged by management and by publications from the Wellness Center that promote exercise and stress reduction. I recall reading a strong exhortation from Pete Nanos (February 4 LIM notes) encouraging all lab workers to set aside half an hour a day to exercise in order to counter stress (particularly during this stressful period at the lab.) For me, like many at TA-35, the only exercise I can fit into half an hour is a walk or jog in the canyon behind my building. If this is so strongly encouraged by management, I find it counter-intuitive that all recreational paths for those of us not lucky enough to work close to the Wellness Center should be closed. Does it really make sense to encourage LANL employees to exercise and relieve stress while shutting the major areas where it is possible to do so? Have you considered what impacts this will have on worker morale?

I am a member of the Mountain Canine Corp, a group which provides a service to this community and to the State by using trained dogs to help find lost persons (generally in wilderness settings.) This service depends on being able to train where dogs and handlers can practice in real-life settings, including DOE land, which has provided excellent and varied training options. Should these areas be closed to the team, it will severely reduce the number of locations near town where we can practice, which in turn will have a negative impact on the team's ability to serve the community. I know a longer letter has been sent on behalf of the team, so I will limit my remarks on this topic, but want to make it clear that the decision to close these areas will affect more than just the search and rescue teams, it will also affect the larger interests of the community and the state resources that depend on having teams that can train in their community in a variety of settings.

A final consideration is the impact that closing these areas will have on other recreational areas. Since the Cerro Grande fire, I have observed a large increase in recreational use of Pueblo canyon due to the fact that it was not burned and does not close when other areas are closed due to fire restrictions. The impact on Pueblo Canyon has been significant and very negative. It will only worsen should other recreational areas be closed, and the negative impact to other recreational areas will also increase. This will have an overall negative impact on the interests of the community as it struggles to recover from the effects of the fire and the limited recreational options now that many areas have burned.

I hope your assessment will take into consideration these concerns. I find it troubling that the form you provided at the Public Meeting asks whether we would like to receive a copy of the final EA and the "Finding of No Significant Impact." My belief, which I hope is echoed by many others in this community, is that there would indeed be a significant impact, and i hope you have not already drawn your conclusions before hearing the concerns of the community.

Rebecca Stevens